

# News Digest

August 2006



Monthly Newsletter of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)

## Indonesian workers in HK intensify actions against their government's anti-migrants' policies

ABOUT 2,000 TO 3,000 INDONESIANS gathered at Victoria Park on Sunday, September 3, to commemorate their Independence Day. Organized by the Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers, or Asosiasi Tenaga Kerja Indonesia di Hong Kong (ATKI-HK). The event with the theme "Empowering the Ethnic Minorities Through Knowledge and Understanding" served as a venue for education on migrants' policies in both host and home countries.

The Home Relations Unit of the Hong Kong government's Home Affairs Bureau sponsored the first part of the main program which featured a public forum with Hong Kong Labor and Immigration officials who presented on issues like discrimination, underpayment and overcharging by employment agencies.

More importantly, according to Eni Lestari, chairperson of the ATKI-HK, the occasion was maximized to expose the recent policies of the Indonesian government that are meant to extort more money from Indonesian migrant workers

It was amazing how the migrants stayed on until the night and intently listened to the discussions particularly about the exploitative policies on migrants being instituted by their own government. In fact, they were able to recruit 30 new members to their organization, reported Lestari.



Indonesian migrants in HK gather to celebrate Independence Day and discuss burning issues of migrant workers

The event was a follow up of a rally they held at Victoria Park on August 20 that ended with a protest march to the Indonesian consulate participated by 200 migrant workers from the Indonesian Migrant Muslim Alliance, WANODIA and ATKI.

They submitted a petition calling to immediately stop the illegal collection of fees from migrant workers by the Indonesian government

through certain government agencies like the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers Overseas responsible for "Issuing Letter No 625/2006 which states that effective March 27, 2006, Indonesian migrant workers who are on leave should get a Letter of Recommendation from the Service Office before migrating through sea, air embarkation or border doors in order to be entitled to free overseas fiscal tax."

Lestari also stated that despite the government's announcement of shelving the policy that charged 400,000 Indonesian rupiah insurance policy (equivalent to HK\$400) and US\$15 protection fund, many migrant workers complain that they are still being forcibly charged in the Jakarta and Central Java airports.



Public education on labor and immigration policies in HK

(cont from p. 1)

To date, the number of Indonesian workers in Hong Kong has already reached 116,000. What the Indonesian government is doing is no less than extortion of the worst kind where migrant workers are being sucked dry of their earnings yet receiving no sufficient services or protection from their government, according to the group.#



Indonesians in HK cry foul over unjust fees of their government

## Sri Lankan group in HK holds leadership seminar

THE ASSOCIATION OF Sri Lankans in Hong Kong (ASL) organized a leadership seminar last 13 August at India Club. Fifteen leaders and members of the organization attended the whole day seminar.

Ramon Bultron, APMM managing director, together with Eni Lestari, chairperson of the Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers in HK (ATKI) provided some group exercises and input on the principles of leadership and solidarity relations. One of the advisers of the ASL also provided input and a group exercise on the importance of being united and organized.

The seminar was held in order to help the leaders and active members of the ASL-HK enhance their leadership skills and adapt to the current issues and campaigns faced by migrant workers in Hong Kong such as the wage hike,

levy and other discriminatory policies of both the Hong Kong government and of the sending countries.

The participants vowed to continue organizing education seminars to know more about their rights as migrant workers and to strengthen unities and relationship with other migrant groups in Hong Kong and elsewhere.

Leadership training seminar is a part of the education program of the APMM. Seminars are held by the APMM in order to equip migrant workers of the skills necessary for the work of the organizations.

The module used by the APMM on these activities was taken from the materials of the Mission for Migrant Workers - a partner organization of the APMM in HK.#

## Macau-bound Filipinos at Clark Airport: "Off-loaded" or fall prey to extortion if found without Affidavit of Support

THE PRACTICE OF requiring Filipinos bound for Macau at the Clark Airport to produce an Affidavit of Support before being allowed to leave is gaining the ire of migrant workers in Macau and departing Filipinos from the said airport.

Inquiries are being done on this matter from concerned government units if there is any policy or memorandum from the government on this matter. The requirement for an Affidavit of Support before going to Macau was scrapped by the Bureau of Immigration in 2003 through

Memorandum Order No. ADD-03-013 issued by then BI Commissioner Andrea Domingo due to strong clamor from migrant organizations in Macau.

Complaints recorded by MIGRANTE-Macau, Macau Cordillerans Association, the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants and other concerned migrants groups revealed that many departing Filipinos had common experience of having their flights cancelled at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport located at the former Clark Airbase in Pampanga. The Philippine Bureau of Immigration (BI) officials stationed in Clark required them to show an Affidavit of Support with a red ribbon and sealed by the Philippine Consulate in Hong Kong. Without this document, they were asked to give grease money amounting from Php5,000 to Php10,000 in order for them to be allowed to take their flight. An Affidavit of Support issued by the Philippine Consulate Hong Kong and POLO-Macau cost HK\$212.50 (276.25 Patacas).

It is odd that this Affidavit of Support is being required only to Filipinos bound for Macau and done at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport. Years before the Memorandum Order No. ADD-03-013, the Affidavit of Support was implemented allegedly to curb illegal recruitment. It did not however resolve the case of human trafficking as it only increased cases of this kind and added financial burden and pressure to Filipino migrants in Macau and Filipinos hoping to find jobs overseas. It also became a venue for corrupt BI officials to extort money from them.

Moreover, vacationing Filipino migrants and relatives bringing with them usual "pasalubongs" (gifts) reported that they were not allowed to bring them into the airline if they did not shell out additional fees asked of them during the check-in process. Victimized by this corrupt practice were passengers who availed of the lowest airfare cost offered by Tiger Airways departing from Clark.#



Macau OFWs say affidavit of support is unnecessary burden

## Majority of Filipinos Working in Homes in Taiwan Have Limited or No Days Off

IN A SURVEY done by the APMM and Migrante International – Taiwan chapter, 81% of Filipinos working as caretakers and domestic helpers answered that they either are given limited days off or none at all in Taiwan.

This is despite the claim of the Council of Labor Affairs (CLA) that it adheres to Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (“All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.”)

The employment contract made by the foreign worker and the employer cannot impair the rights of the former. Workers in homes in Taiwan are not covered by the Labor Standards Law and are only “protected” by their employment contracts.

The CLA’s own statement however contradicts itself when it says that such contracts can be amended and can therefore become valid and lawful. This is reinforced by the view of Atty. Liou Yen-chuan of the Legal Aid Foundation who says that side agreements can legalize no days off. On the other hand, the Philippine government authorities in Taiwan agree to such views and even blame their own nationals for signing such documents.

Aside from the UDHR, this violates the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which provides for the right to have rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays.

Even the United Nation states that such rights are not granted or given to workers by governments or employers - they are basic universal human rights that we all are entitled to by virtue of our humanity. Ironically, Taiwan aspires to be a member of the UN but does not respect this basic right.

The Philippine government, on the other hand, which is a signatory to such

declarations, has no political will to implore the Taiwan government to declare such side agreements as null and void. It makes a mockery of the employment contracts authenticated by Philippine labor authorities in the Philippines which stipulate that all caretakers and domestic helpers are guaranteed weekly days off.

What is happening in Taiwan in practice is that if the migrant worker wants to have a day off all that the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) and even NGO’s can say is that the worker can request her employer to have one, specially if they signed side agreements to this effect. The right to have a day off thus becomes a favor or even a privilege subject to the whims of the employer.

Going back to the survey, members of Migrante International - Taiwan chapter implemented the study in Taipei City and Taipei County. The survey purposely targeted Filipinos because they are perceived by others as having more rights and are more assertive of these than their counterparts from other nationalities. The survey was also focused in the two areas mentioned because these places are supposed to be more liberal than in other parts of Taiwan.

There were 233 respondents, which is more than one percent of the total population of Filipino migrants working in all job categories in the Taipei areas. There are 31,452 Filipinos working as caretakers and domestic workers in the whole of Taiwan. These include those working as nursing aides in hospitals and nursing homes. The latter are included in the protection of the Labor Standards Law.

The reasons given by the respondents why they had no or limited days off are the following:

Reason	Numbers	Percentage
a. Employer does not want	57	55
b. There is a side agreement on this	27	26
c. Others	20	19
Total	104	100

Asked why the employer does not want to provide them with day off, majority answered that there will be no one to take care of their wards who are mostly old people. A few answered that after a year or two they will be given this right. While some interesting answers include, that the caretaker may have a boyfriend, might get sick or that they are only new in Taiwan. One fourth answered that they signed a side agreement agreeing to no day off.

Majority of the workers are classified as caretakers based on their contracts, while 14 percent are domestic helpers. One respondent even answered that her contract stipulated that she is a factory worker.

They take care of the following:

Who do you take care of?	Numbers	Percentage
a. Old person	140	53
b. Child/children	89	34
c. Sick or disabled	34	13
Total	263	100

As can be gleaned from the surveys, there are 30 more answers than the number of respondents. This is because some of the respondents take care of more than one person.

Employers prefer also foreign caretakers and domestic helpers, because they are cheaper to hire than locals, have limited or no days off and are even made to work numerous jobs. These include the ff:

Other kinds of work	Number	Percentage of respondents
a. Cooking	190	82%
b. Cleaning the house	218	94%
c. Taking care of dogs	31	23%
d. Others	96	41%
Total	535	

According to Atty. Liou Yen-chuan this is illegal work as caretakers can only take care of people and not work as maids. However both Taiwanese and Philippine authorities would rather turn a blind eye to this reality.

At the same time, the hiring of foreign caretakers relegates this essential social service from the Taiwan government to the private sector. This is consistent with the Taiwan government's commitment to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which is one of the agreements administered by the WTO.

The GATS liberalizes services by dismantling traditional restrictions by governments on various services sectors. These include health care; hospital care; dental care; childcare; and elderly care among others.

As of July 2006, there were already 151,309 alien nursing workers from six nationalities. These include an unknown number working in nursing homes and in hospitals that are hired by such institutions.

As to the opinion of the migrant workers themselves if they would want to have a day off, 93% of them said yes. They answered they needed to rest, to meet friends and enjoy themselves or to even go to their place of worship to practice their religion.

Having a day off is a universal right. Migrants must be encouraged to unite and assert this right and get the support of advocates. The Labor Standards Law and a standard employment contract that disallows side agreements should protect them.#

### Senator Gavin Marshall takes up Philippine human rights report at the Parliament House in Australia

LABOUR PARTY SENATOR Gavin Marshall has alerted the Australian Senate and encouraged all Australians to show their opposition to the ongoing attacks on democracy and human rights in the Philippines.

He commended to the Parliament the report launched at the Parliament House by Rev. Gregor Henderson, President of the Uniting Church in Australia, entitled *Getting Away with Murder: Impunity for Those Targeting Church Workers in the Philippines*, produced by the Uniting Church in Australia's Justice and International Mission Unit.

The report highlighted numerous cases of murders and death threats perpetrated against the citizens of the

Philippines and gave a detailed description of 14 cases of Uniting (*sic*) Church of Christ members who have been murdered in the past two years.

Senator Marshall raised the obligation of the senators in looking at the role Australia plays in providing support to the Philippines. He said that the Philippines is currently the sixth largest recipient of Australian development assistance at over \$21 million given in the last financial year.

He emphasized the need for strong institutional reform, an adequate witness protection program and a properly resourced human rights commission within the Philippines.#

### Filipinos around the world cry "No" to compulsory SSS payment

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST the proposed SSS compulsory coverage initially launched by migrants groups in Hong Kong is now also being carried by migrant organizations in other countries including KASAMMAKO in Korea, Filipino Migrant Center in Japan, MIGRANTE – Australia, MIGRANTE Europe and MIGRANTE Dubai (UAE). The said groups conducted massive education drive and public signature campaigns among Filipino migrants in their respective areas.

Most of the organizations that joined the campaign are members and partner organizations of MIGRANTE International. The collected signatures will be sent to various government agencies including the Philippine Congress.

The proposed SSS compulsory coverage was first announced in Hong Kong by SSS Executive Vice President Horacio T. Templo during the leaders forum organized by the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong last July 23.

The SSS compulsory coverage will add-up to the long list of mandatory fees being charged to departing OFW's. At the moment, the estimated fees paid for by each OFW to the Philippine government total USD350. This amount excludes payment to recruitment agencies.

In Asia alone, around three million OFW's will be affected by this proposed new mandatory SSS coverage.#



*The call to scrap the proposed SSS mandatory payment reverberates around the world*

## POEA and NLRC rule in favor of dismissed FPC workers

DYNAMIC INT'L. SERVICES Corp., the placement agency of Gil Lebria, et al of Formosa Plastics Corporation (FPC) had its license cancelled by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) for overcharging of placement fees. At the same time, the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) awarded the same plaintiffs damages for such and for being illegally dismissed by CTCL and FPC. CTCL is a subcontractor of FPC. Dynamic, however, appealed both decisions and the case is now pending in court.

These positive results came after the plaintiffs in coordination with Migrante International in the Philippines and in Taiwan including APMM launched a campaign in both places to seek justice for the former. Other than this, there is a pending criminal and civil case in Taiwan for the beating up of Gil Lebria by personnel of FPC. The hearings on both cases would start soon.

These are additional gains in the campaign, all of which reaped victories through the collective actions of the Filipino and Thai workers inside FPC.

Three major strikes and two minor ones were held in less than a year by the 5000 migrant workers in the refinery and naphtha cracker plant of the largest corporation in Taiwan.

The only problems with the POEA and NLRC decisions are the following:

1. The POEA ruled that Dynamic can not be held liable for misrepresentation as Gil et al were apprised of their true

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## On the International Day of the Disappeared

### Hong Kong groups criticize lack of investigation of cases of the "disappeared" in the Philippines

WE FEEL THE grief of the families and friends of victims of forced disappearance and share their demand for justice.

This was declared by Bruce Van Voorhis, convener and spokesperson of the Hong Kong Campaign for the Advancement of Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (HKCAHRPP), as about 40 members of the group and other human rights advocates conducted a protest action at the Philippine Consulate General to commemorate the International Day of the Disappeared last August 30.

"Forced disappearance is one of the gravest forms of human rights violations against any person. Sadly, in the Philippines, it is still widely practiced," he said.

According to the group, the human rights organization KARAPATAN and the Stop the Killings campaign network

to date have documented 181 cases of enforced disappearance. Of these, 38 are known members and leaders of activist organizations.

One of the cases that has stirred the country was the abduction of two women students from the University of the Philippines, Karen Empeno and Sherlyn Cadapan, who were abducted last June. The military has refused even the court's order for them to answer charges that they were the ones who abducted the two women.

"None of the cases of forced disappearance has been solved. What is even more frustrating is that Task Force Usig that is investigating the cases of extrajudicial killings even admitted that they are not looking into the cases of the disappeared because, they said, a body is not available so they cannot start an investigation," Van Voorhis added.

Van Voorhis reported that the fact-finding mission to the Philippines coordinated by the HKCAHRPP with other local groups in Hong Kong in July has revealed widespread violations of human rights in the country and various loopholes and weaknesses in the response of the government.



*HR campaign gains support of HK groups*

These deficiencies, he said, include the questionable independence of the investigating body as the military and police are reportedly the most likely suspects in most cases of extrajudicial killings and forced disappearance. Moreover, many of the witnesses to extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations are afraid to speak out because of the presence of the military in their areas.

The protesters submitted a petition signed by local and regional organizations, migrant associations and concerned individuals pressing the Philippine government to uphold United Nations human rights conventions and resolutions including the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, provide adequate protection to witnesses and the establishment of a truly independent investigative body to bring swift resolution to the cases.#

*Local groups join protest to call for actions on disappearances and widespread human rights violations in the Philippines*



(cont from p. 5)

employer upon arrival in Taiwan. The NLRC, on the other hand, refused to make a ruling on this issue even when it admitted that the migrant workers were surprised to find out that upon arrival in Taiwan they were made to work for another company other than FPC.

- Both POEA and NLRC dismissed the cases against San Lee placement agency for those who were persuaded by Ed Pequero of OWWA to make quitclaim and desistance in favor of said agency and even on Dynamic.

- Both POEA and NLRC affirmed that some of the FPC workers were beaten up by CTCL but no decision was made on this.

Other than this, both POEA and NLRC inferred in some portions of their rulings that MECO was negligent in following up the legitimate demands of the workers by leaving it unresolved. It quoted also the respondents in saying that even MECO upheld that what the workers did was an illegal strike. And that the complainants were the ones who initiated the termination of their employment contracts through MECO. No ruling was also made on this.



Lessons were gained from the FPC workers' struggle

Overall though, the rulings are in favor of the workers. They and their advocates should be vigilant in ensuring that the court would not rule in favor of the defendants. As such would be a great disservice to their sufferings and sacrifices including those migrant workers still in Taiwan.#

## Philippines and Japan sign FTA Accord

### For Arroyo, the future of Filipinos is cheap – Migrante-Japan

FOR GLORIA MACAPAGAL-Arroyo, the future of the Filipino people has a very cheap price. So cheap that she has opted to sell it to Japan by further opening up the local economy in exchange for the annual deployment of 400-500 caregivers and nurses to Japan.

This was the reaction of Migrante-Japan to reports that President Arroyo and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will

*"It is contemptible how the Philippine government trades its citizens for export goods that will only push the country to even greater disaster. This is the aim of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is set to sign with Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi today during the Asia Europe Meeting in Helsinki, Finland.*

*Through the JPEPA, the Philippine government is set to intensify its labor export program in exchange for allowing products of Japanese multinationals to enter the country with reduced tariff and flood the local market with more goods from Japan."*

**APMM Statement on JPEPA**  
09 September 2006

sign a bilateral free-trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries on September 9, 2006 on the sidelines of the Asia-Europe Meeting in Helsinki from September 10-11. The Philippines and Japan struck a basic FTA accord in 2004, but negotiations were hampered mainly over quota on the number of health workers that Japan should accept, and how wide an opening will the Philippines allow for Japanese goods and capital to come in.

"Four hundred to 500 nurses and caregivers each year is too miniscule a price for allowing Japanese businesses to rake in super profits out of the local economy. Japan is aiming for a more liberalized entry of Japanese businesses in the Philippines under the guise of a bilateral free-trade agreement. It is particularly interested in the further opening up of the auto and steel sectors. This is what we have to put up with in exchange for the promised transfer of personnel. Japan's stake is obviously much bigger than the projected combined annual income or remittances of these health workers", remarked Migrante-Japan representative Nestor Puno.

The Migrante-Japan representative also assailed the myth that opening up new markets for overseas Filipino workers,



Phil. gov't targets nurses and caregivers for export to Japan (<http://news.bbc.co.uk>)

particularly nurses and caregivers, will mean additional dollars for the country, and thus, propel development. "What is being left out in the equation, so to speak, is the long-term effect on the health condition of Filipinos should massive deployment of health practitioners for overseas jobs continue" Puno said.

According to Migrante-Japan, the FTA accord that takes effect next year, will unlikely create opportunities enough to ease the worsening economic problems in the Philippines. "On the contrary, such move by the Arroyo government will only deepen the crisis that will kill local manufacturers and give Filipinos the hardest blow", Puno further laments.

Migrante-Japan vows to continue its protest against the FTA. It will launch a campaign to educate Filipinos in Japan on the negative effects of the accord and to demand its abrogation.#

## Case of Filipino migrants in Myeong Kyeong Co., shows rottenness of trainee system

FOUR FILIPINO MIGRANT workers working at Myeong Kyeong Company, processing raw meat complained to KASAMMAKo and to the Migrant Trade Union regarding their inhuman condition in the factory.

Richard, Emerson, Wowwie and Rizaldi all from the Philippines and working as trainees claimed that when they started working in the Company, they were at made to work for only 10 hours. But as the time passed, they were obliged by the company to work 20 hours from 8:00 am until 6:00 am the following day continuously. In many cases, their overtime compensation was reduced despite their long working hours.

In order to change their situation, they told their employers a dozen times that they could not work that long and they also needed time to have enough rest and recover their strength. The management of the Myeong Kyeong Company promised to make changes on their work schedules but nothing was

done. The four Filipino migrant workers repeatedly expressed their request and complaints in many cases but to no avail.

They also communicated with their recruitment agency, DAHLZHEN International Services Incorporated through its agent, Mr. Jun Sevilla, with the same requests and complaints but the Mr. Sevilla just repeatedly kept on saying that he would make a dialogue with the trainees' employer. He just kept on saying and promising to instruct his secretary to call the employer of the Myeong Kyeong company.

Richard, one of the trainee worker, said that after working in the company in such an inhuman condition, he lost weight and is now very skinny. He said that they signed a contract and came to Korea to work, But now, he worries that his health or even his life would be jeopardized because of their condition in the factory.

The four Filipino migrant workers went to the Philippine Embassy to seek assistance, and aired their grievances. At first, the embassy just listed down and documented their complaints. Later on, they were insulted by the embassy personnel and were blamed for running away from the company. The four migrants told them that they did not run away. They just came to the embassy to seek assistance. They were disgusted by the way the embassy officers treated them. All they wanted was to ask the embassy to help them so that they could transfer to another company since the Myeong Kyeong Company was obliging them to work long hours and the DAHLZHEN Agency repeatedly neglected their grievances.

"We are not machines. We are human beings. We can no longer stand being treated like this. We are seeking justice," they said.

"We only want to be transferred to another company so we can earn decently for our families. We are even threatened by the DAHLZHEN Agency that we will be deported," they added.

*"This is an explosive truth about the trainee system. The four migrants workers just wanted to change their inhuman situation and working condition..."*

KASAMMAKo

The DAHLZHEN Agency lied to the workers over and over again. First, the four workers were told that they have already been reported to the immigration as runaways for merely seeking assistance from the Embassy. Later, the agency asked them to return to work for the next two months and promised them that they would transferred later.

According to KASAMMAKo representative, Mark Padlan, "this is an explosive truth about the trainee system. The four migrants workers just wanted to change their inhuman situation and working condition. But instead of addressing their grievances, they receive threat and insults instead. They are the victims, How came they are being blamed? There is something wrong here! The Philippine Embassy and the Korean Government should do something to address this situation. Otherwise, more and more migrants will suffer the same or even worst consequences. And we have nothing else to blame but the exploitative Trainee System, The Philippine Embassy, and the implementors of such system."

Evidently, the increasing incidences of abuse, exploitation and human rights violations against foreign workers is placing the Korean Government in a defensive mode as long as the exploitative system of employment exists, concluded by KASAMMAKo.#

*"We are not machines. We are human beings. We can no longer stand being treated like this. We are seeking justice."*

*- Filipino trainees of Myeong Kyeong Co.*

## NEWS Briefs

### Jeddah, KSA



ALMOST 400 INDIAN NATIONALS without iqama (working permit) were arrested during a raid by the Passport Department. Also arrested were undetermined number of Yemeni "border crossers" who traveled from mountains into Jeddah to find job. Once they reached the country, they peddle cheaper fruits and vegetables while others find work at construction sites as day laborers.#

### Riyadh, KSA



FORTY-FIVE MIGRANTS FROM various countries were apprehended in a 6-hour raid in a district of Al-Sinaia Al Jadeeda where an estimated 29,000 migrant workers reside. Run-away maids were included in the arrests and were taken out from a shelter. The raid was launched by 20 undercover teams of the special task force of 50 soldiers.#

### Taiwan



IN AUGUST 2006, THE Council of Labor Affairs (CLA) came up with various stricter rules and amendment to foreign regulations on import of migrant workers (housemaids, family caregivers, factory workers, construction workers). These were:

1. Caregivers hired overseas can only stay with their wards in emergency rooms or in general hospitals to prevent caregivers doing extra work assigned to them. Breach of this rule will result to a fine for employers from NT\$30,000 to NT\$150,000. It now prohibits caregivers being assigned with patients at professional care centers as in previous practice.

2. Permission to hire foreign workers shall be cancelled when foreign labor management entities and employers fail to obtain a license for professionals, the criteria are not met and worksite situation of migrant workers they hired are not improved. The unacceptable inhumane treatment of Thai migrants working at the mass rapid transit system in Kaushiung City last August 2006 resulted to a protest riot.#

### Macau



OVERSEAS FILIPINO MIGRANTS are raising questions as to why POLO-Macau and OWWA/POEA/LAC at the Philippine airport give them difficulty to get an Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC) if they do not become members of OWWA or reactivate their membership. The US\$25 fee is equivalent to over 200 Patacas. In one of the consular visit of the Philippine Consulate General (PCG-HK) to Macau early

August, one OFW whose father died a night ago came to get an OEC but OWWA official Mike Garcia told her she must become an OWWA member first.

Many OFWs inside POLO-Macau witnessed how Mr. Garcia told them that he had been in service for 20 years at the POEA and OFWs are required to become OWWA members. He further said that it is only OWWA that is helping OFWs. When asked what benefits OFWs get from OWWA, Mr Garcia made an example of himself saying that he did not ask the benefits he will get from GSIS. He said that if OFWs wish to get benefits from OWWA, they could climb up of a building and jump from there.#

## You are all invited to the Philippines this December

**JOBS AND JUSTICE  
AN INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON NEOLIBERAL  
LABOR**

**MARKET RESTRUCTURING,  
LABOR RIGHTS AND  
WORKERS' RESISTANCE**

*7-8 December 2006*

*Manila, Philippines*

**International League of  
People's Struggle (ILPS)  
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**Consultative Conference**

*10 December 2006*

*Cebu City, Philippines*

**Conference on U.S. Militarism  
and War on Terror in the  
Asia-Pacific**

*12-13 December, 2006*

*Cebu City, Philippines*

**Launching of Regional  
Campaign vs US Military Bases**

*13 December 2006*

*Cebu City, Philippines*

**Meeting of the International  
League of People's Struggle  
(ILPS) Study Commission on Im-  
migrants & Refugees and the  
Convenors Meeting for the  
Formation of the International**

**Migrant Alliance (IMA)**

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